

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the Claims as follows:

1. (Amended) A method for modulating mechanoreception or mechanosensation in a mammal comprising administering to said mammal an effective amount of VR-OAC polypeptide, or active fragments or portions thereof, or a modulator of VR-OAC polypeptide.

4. (Amended) A method for treating a condition characterized by altered mechanoreception or mechanosensation in a mammal comprising administering to said mammal an effective amount of VR-OAC polypeptide, or active fragments or portions thereof, or a modulator of VR-OAC polypeptide, wherein said VR-OAC polypeptide comprises the sequence set out in any of SEQ ID NOS: 2, 4, 8 or 9.

Please add the following claims:

15. (New) The method of Claim 1 or 4 wherein said modulator of VR-OAC is selected from substances which mimic, activate or inhibit the activity of VR-OAC.

16. (New) The method of Claim 1 or 4 wherein said modulator of VR-OAC is an agonist or antagonist of VR-OAC.